

**Education Governance Responses  
Hinesburg Meeting (2/13/07) - Champlain Valley UHS Cafeteria**

29 Attendees (facilitated by Robin Scheu)

**Question #1: What are the advantages and disadvantages of the present education governance system in your community?**

**Advantages**

Economy of scale – purchasing power, e.g. copier paper, human resources, financial support  
Unified curriculum; common high school  
St. George has school choice high school  
Local control – accessibility  
Local meetings and input  
More efficient – shares resources, shares buses  
Local control of spending  
Schools reflect the unique character of each town  
Supports strong test scores  
Local ownership – community & professionals  
Cross-pollination and diversity of educational philosophies/methods  
School board focus – engagement  
More citizen involvement  
Successful superintendents will be exceptional  
Sharing resources  
Ability to match resources to community “desires”  
The “Vermont” way – tradition  
Combines master contract & business management  
Local town ownership for elementary schools

**Disadvantages**

Superintendent answering to too many voices; too many meetings  
Unclear authority; who does principal report to? Board or Superintendent?  
Local suspicion that CSSU is “them” not us.  
Same vs. different curriculum; equity and delivery  
Question equity of representation  
Superintendents stressed/ principals stressed  
SU board too large  
Board recruitment  
Lots of time spent on meetings  
School board lacks vision on details; staff work/board work  
Repetitive work by everyone  
Perceived inefficiency  
Board micro-management  
Perceived funding confusion  
Requires non-traditional superintendent  
Staff turnover  
Inconsistent programs in core subjects  
Allows inequity of resources  
Reduced citizen involvement in union school

**Question #2: What are the advantages and disadvantages of the school district model suggested by Commissioner Cate in his White Paper?**

**Advantages**

Better use of resources; buildings, teachers  
Better pool of applicants for school board  
Purchasing power of bigger group  
Better pool of candidates for principals/superintendents  
Superintendent could focus more on the big picture – more time on education  
Redesign education – make it better  
Streamlines board/superintendent relationships  
Reduces redundancy  
Good to have this statewide conversation  
Clearer authority  
Streamlined policy creation & implementation  
More consistent teaching across schools  
Costs savings - is there savings?  
One budget?  
Easier to find superintendents  
Potentially greater equity  
Could tax rates for SU be unified?  
School choice? K-8 or K-6?  
Statewide teacher contracts? Or regional?  
Consolidation in small schools; grades 1-4 and grades 5 – 8.

**Disadvantages**

Loss of local control and voice  
Different school needs  
More political ideas rather than education  
Too few board members & concentrates power in too few hands  
Not a grassroots movement  
Potential for lack of voter/parent participation  
Dilution of ownership  
Reduces the breadth of ideas  
Reduces responsibility and role of building principal  
Potentially more distant from the community  
Potential cost increase  
Inequity of representation on boards  
Different tax rates – could there be one grand list, same tax rates?  
Fear of school closings  
Doesn't go far enough

**Question #3: Do you have other suggestions for a governance model? If so, please tell us what that is and what you believe are the advantages and disadvantages of your suggestions.**

**Advantages**

Walk first in districts with many towns: 2 boards based on population; one elementary and one union school (middle/high school)

Allows time to work out and preserve “local control” issues  
Eliminates most of the “many” board issues  
Easier to coordinate curriculum & services  
Introduce magnet schools  
School choice: public, private, and home school, too!

**Disadvantages**

Review administrative/pupil across unions  
How much does administration drive the cost/pupil?  
Union/teacher contracts: would regional contracts put school boards in a better position  
What is the financial impact? Data?  
Single representative not good – lack of diversity of ideas within a town  
Facilitates rapid change of school board  
Student/teacher ratios do not reflect the number of students in classroom  
Why not more teacher representation in this structure?  
What is the effect of the proposal on education quality?  
Seems to be more toward a national norm rather than educational excellence

**Debrief Comments:**

Hand vote of those who support it – if had to vote today (question):  
Don’t have enough info to do so, but some may be ready to see some change – Need more info.  
People unclear on current statutes and current governance structure (most boards don’t operate the way statutes say – boards do things differently on local level)  
Rethink role of superintendent  
What are the costs involved in consolidation  
What is being done at the state level to fund education  
Would programs & curriculum be standardized across state & districts?  
What’s the funding mechanism?  
Will it lead to consolidation of small schools?  
Want national system  
Geography should not dictate  
Magnet schools